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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

819 OCT -3 AM 11:30 Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: September 20, 1979

SUBJECT: Activities of Afghan Dissidents

PARTICIPANTS: Nanquy Tarzi

Afghan exile; former officer  
of Afghan Embassy in Washington,  
and of Ministry of Foreign  
Affairs.

George G. B. Griffin

M/FSI/LT/DARI

DATE & PLACE: September 12, 1979, at Griffin home in Washington

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Tarzi came to see me to tell me about his recent trip to Europe. He had planned to take his family to England for a visit, but just as he was about to leave, news had come of the formation of a rebel "coalition" in Germany. His brother-in-law, Syed Ahmed Gailani, telephoned to ask him to take a message to the "coalition" members about to meet in Hamburg. (Gailani did not attend the meeting.) In his message Gailani explained that his group would consider favorably an invitation to join the group. However, before his group could take such a step, Gailani and representatives of other would-be coalition members would have to discuss (and, by implication, agree upon) the "basis" for the coalition.

When Tarzi arrived in Germany, he sensed that things had changed. The group meeting there had become the creature of General Abdul Wali, King Zahir's son-in-law, who seemed to be in charge. (Also present were former General Mustaqni and former Ambassador to the US Karim.) Tarzi met twice with Abdul Wali in his hotel room, but he declined an invitation to attend the group's meetings because he had no authority from Gailani to do so. (During our conversation

~~M/FSI/LT/DARI: GGBGriffin~~

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Tarzi several times protested that he did not represent any group; he was "just Gailani's messenger.")

Tarzi revealed that the "coalition" had decided to try to determine whether the rebel leaders in Pakistan would accept Abdul Wali's involvement in their activities. (It was not clear to him whether Abdul Wali was acting on his own or whether he was representing King Zahir, even after he had closely questioned the king's cousin. The cousin said that until recently Zahir had not wished to become involved with the dissidents, while Abdul Wali obviously wanted to play "his" role. He implied that Zahir now wanted to help, but wanted to probe for likely reactions before committing himself.) The group in Germany asked Tarzi to offer support to the king on behalf of the Afghans in Washington, but he refused to do so because he "could not speak for the hundreds of different Afghans in Washington." He had telephoned Zahir (in Rome) from Germany "just as a courtesy," but did not discuss anything of substance. Meanwhile, Ambassador Karim was to make preparations for Abdul Wali to go to Peshawar. (They had not yet been able to obtain a Pakistani visa for the general.)

Tarzi claimed that, at his urging, the "coalition" considered drafting a set of broad policies. They agreed that such a step was necessary to avoid having Afghanistan end up like "other places" (Iran). They feared that even though the Khalqis might be ousted, they would return even stronger if their successors fell to squabbling over personalities. Thus, they also agreed that they needed to form the basis for a government where individuals could come and go without affecting its stability. However, Tarzi was told that their immediate goal was to topple the Khalq government, an effort which left no time to work out policies or build grass roots support.

Tarzi recalled that several members of the "coalition" became unnerved when they heard that the Soviets had made "tentative contact" with King Zahir. He tried hard to find out what I knew about the story, noting that it had been printed in the New York Times. I told him that I had no idea about its validity, but commented that it would be conceivable if it were true that the Soviets were trying to quell the fighting in the country by inducing Afghan dissidents to join the regime. Tarzi apparently viewed the notion of Soviet contact with the Zahir camp as dangerous.

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He said that he had noted that Ambassador Karami planned to visit Kabul and that the "Kabul Club" men on the rebel side, other than those in the "Revolution" (including former Generals Vahid and Hafiz Jom'el, son-in-law of the Shah), were to travel to Europe and the US to try to gain the support of various internationalists for a "Council of 16 or 12" to replace the present rebel groups, including those in Pakistan.

According to him, some "Revolution" members suggested that the rebel groups must be experienced in fighting Kabul -- like the Mujahideen. However, he had urged them first to investigate Muslim Brotherhood infiltration into the rebel ranks, stating that the Brotherhood had never been crushed in Egypt, Syria or Iraq, and that Najib had failed Haroon in Iraq for 8 years because of his role in the Brotherhood. He said that he warned them that if Brotherhood members ever came to power in Kabul, the Soviets would return within two weeks. He suggested that rebel war leaders had a role to play in shaping Afghanistan's future but argued that only "moderates" could be in the governing councils. He had informed the group that Najib insisted that extremists of any sort be excluded from the government. To illustrate his concern, he called for mutual suspicion of his own followers, noting that they were needed to fight for the good of their peoples (local religious leaders).

He stated that he suggested that most Afghan exiles know little about the situation in Afghanistan, and doubt that joining the fight for freedom fighters will help to guarantee their future.

He also noted that the rebels had received about \$1 or \$2 million, mostly from the Saudis. He claimed that most of it had gone to Gul Husein and Babbar via the (Pakistani) Jamaat-ul-Islami (which took very large cuts). (He added that religious leaders in Iraq had given some support to Afghan Shi'as, who refused to share any of it with the majority Sunnis, or to cooperate with the Saudis in Beirut). He commented that Babbar and Gul Husein intended a race to obtain money from the Saudis. Apparently, the Saudi oil company which handled the transactions for the GHI had refused to make a donation until the four rebel groups in Islamabad formed a joint front. To meet this condition, Babbar united his organization with three or four others. He then drew up a coalition agreement, had it signed by his own men, Gul Husein, and showed it to the Saudis as proof of a front. The Saudis withdrew the story that he had done so.

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Discussing other possible sources of support, Tarzi doubted that the Iranians would help if King Zahir were involved with the rebels, since Khomeini is opposed to monarchs, even if Tehran were convinced that Zahir did not want to retrieve his throne. Because Islamabad was in a "mess," with preparations for elections and its problems with the USG over the nuclear weapons issue, Pakistan was not likely to supply much aid. The Saudis would never provide support openly because of their fears of Soviet reactions.

Tarzi archly observed that Ambassador Karim had implied (without ever saying as much) that he had some sort of USG support or backing; the others had scoffed at the notion. I responded that neither Karim nor any other Afghan was supported by the USG in his efforts to overthrow the Khalqis.

Outlining his views of the situation, Tarzi noted that Afghans are slow to grasp change. This meant, he argued, that they always hailed new governments, naive in the belief that any change would be for the better. However, they now understand the dangers represented by the Khalqis and are beginning to talk openly against the regime (as they had about every other government in the past). Tarzi saw this as a healthy sign which could be of considerable benefit to the dissidents.

On the other hand, Tarzi repeated that the rebels' most urgent needs are material, mostly ammunition and fuel. (He never hinted that the USG should meet any of these needs.) He asserted that the dissidents are still hopeful that the Khalqis can be ousted before winter, but if that does not happen, they will continue their fight. In saying so, however, he expressed the fear that the winter would allow the Khalqis to further entrench themselves, and perhaps gain more acceptance in the eyes of the Afghan public.

BIG NOTES: Tarzi has never complained (as some Afghans do) that he is in need of money or other material goods. He continues to dress well and obviously travels a lot. However, he did confide to a search for employment, saying that he had been turned down by the UN because of a Kabul veto. He reported that his brother had escaped from Afghanistan in the trunk of a car in late July via Pakistan. The brother is now in Paris.

Approved: INF/RNA/GHarris

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